

Special Education Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes
Comfort Suites of Helena
June 25, 2015

Members in Attendance: Dan Laughlin, Barbara Varnum, Theresa Becker, Wendy Studt

Excused Members: Harold Olson, Courtney Bell, Christine Whitlatch, Kellie Ann Hicks, Tessie Rose Bailey, Doug Dellwo, Dave Marzolf, Marvin Williams, Peter Halloran, Sindie Kennedy, Tristan Scott

Non-Members in Attendance: Dick Trerise, Frank Podobnik, Dale Kimmet, Mandi Gibbs, Anne Rainey, Marlene Wallis

Thursday, June 25, 2015

Vice-Chairperson Dan Laughlin called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The Panel members, OPI staff and visitors introduced themselves.

The Panel did not have a quorum present at the meeting; therefore, the approval of the Proposed Agenda and the Minutes of the May 7-8, 2015, meeting will be presented for approval at the fall meeting of the Panel.

Call for Public Comments

Vice-Chairperson Dan Laughlin made a call for public comments. There were no public comments.

Division Report

Frank Podobnik informed the Panel that Iris Ziegler will join the staff in the Professional Development Unit, Special Education Division, as the Coordinator of the School Climate Transformation (SCT) Grant. The School Climate Grant is a grant from the Department of Education.

Frank told the Panel that NASDSE is discussing ESEA reauthorization, but not talking about the IDEA reauthorization at this time.

Compliance Monitoring Yearly Results

Dale Kimmet distributed the Special Education Monitoring—Student Record Review Findings Report. The report covered Timelines, Special Education Records, Referrals, Evaluation Plan, Evaluation Report, IEPs, Transition IEPs, and IEP Amendments. Dale reviewed the total reviewed, total noncompliant and percent noncompliant for each area. The report is a part of the minutes.

Early Assistance/Complaint Yearly Review

Mandi Gibbs, Early Assistance Program Director, presented the Yearly Review. She informed the Panel that she receives a wide range of telephone calls (approximately 20 per week). Mandi assists parents and school districts with problems that include questions about 504 plans, IEPs, behaviors, bullying, and issues with school personnel.

Mandi told the Panel that there were three due process cases filed; five state complaints (three were settled).

SSIP/APR Discussion

Because the meeting was missing several Panel members, Dick Trerise gave a short presentation on the SSIP and APR.

Montana Special Education Guidance

The Panel was informed that included in their meeting packet is a copy of the “Special Education in Montana” guide. This guide contains brief descriptions of various processes and procedures and responses to frequently asked questions the OPI staff have collected. The guide is only available through the Special Education Division Web page.

Election of Officers/Recognition of Outgoing Panel Members

The election of officers will be held at the meeting in September because a quorum was not present.

Wendy Studt, an outgoing panel member representing PartC/IDEA, was presented with an appreciation plaque for the services she provided to the Panel. The other outgoing members will receive their plaques and appreciation letters by mail. Those outgoing members are Doug Dellwo, representing Teacher of Children with Disabilities; Dave Marzolf, representing State/Local Administrator; and Marvin Williams, representing Vocational, Community, or Business Concerned with the Provision of Transition Services to Children with Disabilities.

Preview of September 17-18, 2015, Meeting

Panel Orientation
Election of Officers

The meeting adjourned at 2:30.